



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

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DOE Lowers Age Limit for B Reactor Tours *Families, schools invited to visit National Historic Landmark*

RICHLAND, Wash. – Families with kids above the age of 12, along with middle schools and high schools, will be among those invited to sign up for the coveted seats on the B Reactor National Historic Landmark tour when registration opens at midnight March 20th, 2012.

“Making this change is an important milestone for this community,” said Matt McCormick, manager of the Department of Energy’s (DOE) Richland Operations Office. “The facility has safely hosted more than 25,000 visitors over the last three years and is carefully maintained for public access. It’s time we expand its ability to connect with people on both Hanford’s storied past and the importance of completing cleanup.”

“The B Reactor National Historic Landmark stands as a testament to American ingenuity in science and engineering,” said Gov. Chris Gregoire. “It’s important for our young people to understand the role this facility and the Hanford Site played in world history. I commend the Department of Energy for now making it possible for middle and high school students here in the State of Washington and around the nation to come and visit the B Reactor as part of their educational experience, and for families with children to tour it together for the first time.”

“This is great news for families and the local community,” said U.S. Sen. Patty Murray. “The B Reactor played a critical role in the history of our nation, and families will now have the opportunity to come out together to learn about and reflect on the contribution made by Hanford and the Tri-Cities during World War II and the Cold War.”

“I’m encouraged that Matt McCormick has taken this step. It’s particularly important that our young people who didn’t live through World War II understand the critical work done at Hanford in the defense of our nation,” said Congressman Doc Hastings. “Touring B Reactor is an unparalleled experience that makes history come alive more than any textbook ever could.”

A total of 104 B Reactor tours will be available during the 2012 season, on the dates below:

- April 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 16, 17, 21(8 am only), and 30
- May 1, 2, 5, 14, 15, 29, 30
- June 2, 11, 12, 13, 16, 25, 26, 27
- July 9, 10, 11, 14, 16, 17, 18, 23, 24, 25, and 28
- August 6, 7, 8, 11, 20, 21, 22, 25
- September 4, 5, 8, 17, 18, 19, 22

Tours will begin at 8 a.m. and 11:15 a.m. weekdays and Saturdays. Each tour lasts approximately 4.5 hours. Registration will begin at 12:01 a.m., on Tuesday, March 20, 2012. A portion of tour slots will be filled on a first-come, first-served basis through an online registration system; tour registrations are also available on a first-come, first-served basis by calling (509) 376-1647, or signing up at the B Reactor Tour Headquarters located at 2000 Logston Boulevard, Richland, Washington. The tours are free. Cameras are welcome. Children between the ages of 12-18 must be accompanied by a parent, or legal guardian on the tour. The full process for registration of minor visitors is explained on the B Reactor Tour Website at <http://www.hanford.gov/page.cfm/HanfordSiteTours> or <http://manhattanprojectbreactor.hanford.gov/>

A limited number of opportunities are available for school tours in 2012. Registration information will be available on the B Reactor tours website March 20th. Based on interest this year, DOE will evaluate adding additional slots for school tours in 2013.

“Every year this tour program gets bigger and stronger,” said Colleen French, Government Programs Manager for DOE Richland Operations Office, and the B Reactor Preservation Project manager. “In our second year, we expanded the places to visit within the reactor and doubled visitor capacity. Year three we started accepting international guests and added walk-in registration and more group tours. And now, by lowering the age limit, we’ll be able to reach out to an entirely new segment of the local, regional, and national public and draw them into Hanford’s story.”

Even visitors who have been to B Reactor before will find something new to learn about and appreciate in 2012. The reactor’s original front face work area ceiling lights have been restored and returned to duty, giving the area back its original appearance. Visitors can now walk into the front face electrical room and see the intricacies of the individually hand-tied systems that modern electricians have called a “work of art.” The tour also now allows a peek into the never-before seen rear face water sampling room, where workers tested the water coming off the fuel rods and stood on a designated “safety dot” on the floor in case that water was more radioactive than it should have been. And, included as part of the tour presentation by popular demand now is the locomotive and cask car exhibit, which guests will be able to get a closer look at and hear about how they fit into the Hanford story.

Since DOE began its public access program in 2009, the B Reactor has had visitors from all 50 states and 39 countries. In August 2011, the B Reactor Preservation Project was honored with the Chairman's Award from President Obama's Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.

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